

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

a monolithic needle hub[;] including an integrally formed [a] collar extending distally from the needle hub and defining an interior cavity; and

a shield having a proximal end receivable [~~by~~] within the interior cavity of the collar in an interlocking engagement and including a plurality of hingedly connected segments, the shield being extensible between a retracted position and an extended position;

wherein the interior cavity of the collar of the monolithic needle hub defines notches that receive tabs formed with the proximal end of the shield to lock the needle hub [~~with~~] to the shield.

2. (Previously canceled).

3. (Previously canceled).

4. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 1, further comprising at least two surfaces which engage to limit rotation of the shield relative to the needle hub.

5. (Currently amended): A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

a monolithic needle hub having [a] an integral collar defining an interior cavity, the monolithic needle hub supporting a needle having a distal end; and

a shield having a proximal end, and a distal end and a lock disposed therebetween, the proximal end of the shield being receivable within the interior cavity of the collar in an interlocking engagement, the shield being manually extensible from a retracted position to an

extended position, such that the distal end of the shield extends in parallel with a longitudinal axis of the needle, wherein the lock is configured to capture[s] a portion of the needle disposed proximal to the distal end of the needle ~~in a configuration~~ to prevent displacement of the shield from the extended position and wherein the distal end of the shield encloses at least a portion of the distal end of the needle when the shield is in the extended position.

6. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the collar is monolithically formed with the needle hub.

7. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the shield includes at least two hingedly connected segments.

8. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the interior cavity defines notches that receive tabs formed with the proximal end of the shield.

9. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 8, wherein the tabs are biased for receipt within the notches.

10. (Previously canceled).

11. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the shield is irreversibly locked in the extended position.

12. (Previously canceled).

13. (Previously canceled).

14. (Previously amended): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the lock includes a portion configured to flexibly engage the needle and biased to lockably retain the needle.

15. (Previously amended): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5,

wherein the lock is configured to lock the shield in the extended position.

16. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the shield includes a linear bearing configured to enclose at least a portion of the distal end of the needle.

17. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the linear bearing is hingedly connected to the shield proximal to the distal end of the shield.

18. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein the linear bearing is configured such that at least a portion of the needle is enclosed by the shield during extension of the shield.

19. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the needle hub has a luer fitting configured to attach to a syringe.

20. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the shield includes a proximal segment engaging a retention catch formed with the proximal end of the shield to releasably dispose the shield in the retracted position.

21. (Previously canceled).

22. (Previously canceled).

23. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the shield has an articulating actuator configured to urge the shield towards the extended position.

24. (Previously canceled).

25. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the needle hub includes guide surfaces to facilitate engagement of the shield and the needle hub.

26. (Previously canceled).

27. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 7, wherein the segments are connected via living hinges.

28. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 27, wherein the segments include relief portions formed adjacent the living hinges.

29. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 28, wherein the relief portions are configured to flex inwardly toward the needle.

30. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 5, wherein the shield has a proximal segment including at least one rib.

31. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 30, wherein the at least one rib has a transverse orientation.

32. (Previously canceled).

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- 58. (Previously canceled).
- 59. (Previously canceled).
- 60. (Original): The medical needle shield apparatus according to claim 7, wherein at least one segment includes at least one rib for positioning the needle.
- 61. (Previously canceled).
- 62. (Original): The medical needle shield apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the shield further includes a raised surface for urging the shield to the extended position.
- 63. (Original): The medical needle shield apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the

needle comprises an open-ended needle.

64. (Original): The medical needle shield apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the needle comprises a double wall needle.

65. (Original): The medical needle shield apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the distal end of the needle includes a bevel aligned in a plane of symmetry with the shield for indicating orientation of the bevel.

66. (Previously canceled).

67. (Previously canceled).

68. (Previously canceled).

69. (Currently amended): A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

a monolithic needle hub means for supporting a needle having a distal end and having [a] an integral collar defining an interior cavity; and

a shield means, having a proximal end, a distal end and a lock disposed therebetween, the distal end of the shield means being configured to be received within ~~for engaging~~ the interior cavity of the collar of the needle hub means in an interlocking engagement therewith, the shield means being manually extensible between a retracted position and an extended position, such that the distal end of the shield means extends in parallel with a longitudinal axis of the needle, wherein the lock is configured to capture ~~captures~~ a portion of the needle disposed proximal to the distal end of the needle ~~in a configuration~~ to prevent displacement of the shield means from the extended position [and], wherein the distal end of the shield means encloses at least a portion of the distal end of the needle when the shield means is in the extended position.

70. (Original): A medical needle shield apparatus as recited in claim 69, wherein the

shield means includes a locking means for locking the shield means in the extended position.

71. (Currently amended): A medical needle shield apparatus comprising:

a monolithically formed needle hub having [a] an integrally formed collar defining an interior cavity having notches, the needle hub supporting a needle cannula having a distal end; and

a shield having a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of the shield being receivable within the interior cavity of the collar in an interlocking engagement, wherein the shield has tabs biased to project through the notches, the shield including a distal segment and a proximal segment connected via a living hinge, and being extensible between a retracted position and an extended position, the distal segment including a linear bearing configured to slide along the needle cannula during extension of the shield and enclose at least a portion of the needle cannula in the extended position and the proximal segment having a locking means for locking the shield in the extended position, the proximal end of the shield having a retention catch configured to engage the proximal segment for releasably ~~disposing~~ securing the shield in the retracted position, the proximal segment further including transverse ribs.

72. (Previously canceled).

73. (Previously canceled).

74. (Previously canceled).

75. (Previously canceled).

76. (Previously canceled).

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78. (Previously canceled).

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79. (Previously canceled).

80. (Previously canceled).

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